

## **You Turn Me Into Somebody Loved** by orphan\_account

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**Summary:**

Mike's been sick with the flu for three days, and to Will that feels something like forever.

## You Turn Me Into Somebody Loved

### Author's Note:

so after much convincing from others, i am now in the process of moving some of my byeler writing over from tumblr onto here to make it easier to find. i'll try to clean them up a little as i do so.

also hi i was the one that wrote "i never find out 'til i'm head over heels" but i orphaned it a couple months back because.....Reasons. anyway what's up i'm back and making an attempt at writing more.

title taken from the weepies' song "somebody loved".

"I can't believe your mom finally let me into your quarantine zone," Will says as he enters Mike's room. He closes the door gently behind him although the space already feels a bit stuffy.

Mike smiles from where he's cocooned in his blankets. He struggles, but manages to sit up against the wall behind his bed with all but his head covered by the thick comforter, and Will feels the sweet, familiar warmth wash over him at the sight of Mike's face. God, he's missed him.

On the floor beside the bed is a trashcan overflowing with used tissues. A half empty bottle of cold medicine is tipped over on his bedside table (the grape kind - Will's not sure how Mike has managed to choke so much of that down over the past three days).

"I think I convinced her that if you don't come up to show me what I missed in calculus the past three days, I'll definitely fail out of eleventh grade and have no choice but to become a rodeo clown traveling aimlessly across the midwest."

The flu that's been plaguing Mike since Monday has yet to leave his head and all of his "v"s come out like "b"s, and he snuffles after every other word. Will finds that it only endears him more to Mike - red nose, messy hair, and all.

He laughs as he sets his notebooks down on the corner of Mike's desk and walks toward the bed, carefully avoiding stepping on any tissues that haven't quite made their way into the waste bin thanks to Mike's less-than-stellar aim.

Mike hums out a happy noise and unfurls himself from his blanket cave, reaching out with long, spider-like arms to yank Will close to him and pull him into a hug. The soft press of his feverish face against Will's flannel shirt feels warm even through the thick layer of fabric, and Will's mouth twists down into a frown.

"You're burning up," he says.

A soft, careful hand finds its way to Mike's forehead. He ignores the mumbles of protest as he forces himself backward, out of Mike's grip, so he can push the hair back from his face and make note of the glassiness of his eyes and the red-pink flush to his skin.

"I'm fine," Mike insists with a shake of his head.

He grabs Will's hand between his own and pulls hard, sending Will stumbling and falling face-first onto the bed.

"You're a nuisance," he bites out, but there's laughter in his voice as he finds a way to situate himself among the various blankets and pillows tossed along the mattress.

Mike sighs in satisfaction, curling up to lie down with his head resting in Will's lap, his low whisper of *I missed you* nearly lost among the rustling of the sheets as he tries to get comfortable.

"Mike," Will says softly. "You shouldn't let me disturb your sleep. I only came by to drop off your homework."

It hurts him a little just to say it, because the truth is he'd rather be locked up here with Mike in his sick-den than anywhere else in the world. But he also doesn't want to impede the process of him feeling better by keeping him awake when he should be sleeping.

Mike pouts and opens his eyes to focus on Will.

"Please stay. Just for a little while. I bet it'll make me feel better."

His voice is a little raw from the sore throat and a lot emotional from the three days of illness that has separated him from Will, thanks to Karen's very careful regulation of her sick child. The most contact they've had was a ten minute phone conversation the night before, during which Mike blew his nose thirty times and then fell asleep on the line before Will could properly say goodbye.

Will's heart pulls itself into a bind and he reaches down to run his fingers through the curly mess of Mike's hair. He should definitely go, his rational brain tells him - he's likely to get sick himself if he stays much longer - but he finds the too-warm sheets of Mike's bed and the pleasant weight of Mike resting against him is making him feel lethargic and complacent right where he is.

"Yeah, okay," he mumbles out, and Mike brightens a bit before furrowing his brow and opening his mouth to speak again.

"I can't believe she kept you away from me for so long."

Maybe it's silly, that three days has felt like *so long*, but Will has been showing up to the Wheeler house every afternoon with Mike's missed assignments in tow only to be stopped short by Karen at the front door, all calm mom-smile and friendly-stern voice. It's taken them far too much time for Will's taste to convince her that he really does need to see Mike; and Will has felt each and every hour of those three days somewhere deep inside his chest. In the lag of his pulse. Like someone has reached inside him and formed a fist around his heart, squeezing just this side of too tight.

"To be fair, you've been pretty sick," Will reasons, because he likes Mrs. Wheeler and he can't really blame her for wanting Mike to get better.

Mike coughs on a laugh and reaches up to run his fingertips over Will's face, lingering on the mole above his lip and settling finally at the hollow of his throat where he catches the humming buzz of Will's pulse with his ice cold hand.

"Yeah, but you're my boyfriend," he says. "You're supposed to be here when I'm sick. To take care of me or whatever."

Will blushes, a pleasant carnation pink blossoming over his cheeks, and swallows hard.

*Boyfriend.* He lets the word sit at the front of his mind, wants to repeat it out loud just to feel the tender weight of it against his tongue, to hear the timid way it will leave his mouth - embarrassed and shy, yet somehow entirely certain at the same time. It's not a word they let themselves use often, because in Hawkins it's better not to risk the wrong person overhearing it, the name for this secret, erroneously forbidden thing between them.

And so to hear Mike say it out loud - so casually, like it's common knowledge half the world over - it makes a slow warmth unwrap itself and settle like a new coat of paint into every crack in Will's heart. He takes a deep breath and catches Mike's hand with his own, intertwines their fingers.

"It's not like *she* knows that," he says. Then, softer: "She can't know it."

The words come out a bit more melancholy than he'd intended but it's hard to hide it sometimes, how much it hurts to pretend Mike means nothing more to him than any of his other friends. To pretend he doesn't daydream about the whisper of Mike's hand against his own beneath the table in chemistry class. To act as though his breath doesn't tangle itself into an unmanageable knot and wrap itself around his lungs with expert precision whenever he catches Mike's eye from across the hallway. To pretend he doesn't look at Mike and see his whole damn heart projected back at him, doesn't taste the promise of some kind of future with every fleeting kiss they manage to steal.

Sometimes it just gets a little hard, pretending.

"I wish she could."

Mike's voice is soft as he says it, wistful as he opens his eyes and presses their intertwined hands to his warm face to place a kiss against Will's knuckles.

"I wish everyone could know how much I love you."

Will's heart does a stutter-stop in his chest and he thinks for a moment that it must be the fever talking. Either that or the cold medicine, because he and Mike...they haven't said that word yet.

Sure, Will's thought it hundreds of times: certainly every day over the last nine months they've been together; probably ever since his return from the upside down and his multiple brushes with death and also with the soft weight of Mike's hand against his own; possibly since the first time Mike placed an arm around him in first grade when Will had fallen off his bike and skinned his knee so badly that the blood had run down into his sock and gone all tacky against his foot as he'd limped home. He's thought it for years. An entire lifetime, maybe. But they haven't *said* it.

He looks down at Mike and expects to see that same feverish glaze, a faraway look on his face like his brain is certainly somewhere else, lost in the haze of illness. Instead all he sees is soft, quiet confidence and the kind of sure and steady gaze that Mike is so expert at - like he's daring Will to challenge him on this. But this isn't something Will is going to challenge him on. Not today. Not ever.

"I love you too," he says, and the words feel big but taste pleasant and it's okay right now, that no one else can hear it. That no one else can know.

*They don't deserve to know*, Will thinks to himself as Mike nuzzles against him with his lips pulled up into a sleepy smile.

"You know, I think I'm starting to feel a little better already," Mike says, his tone playful and sweet. "Looks like I was right. You're healing me after all, Byers."

Will rolls his eyes but he can't keep the fond look off of his face as he whispers *dork* and pulls the blankets further up around Mike's shoulders. It doesn't take long for Mike to begin nodding off with his head still pillowed in Will's lap, his breath coming out in soft, whistling snores that make Will giggle silently in the evening-dark of the room.

"Will you still be here when I wake up?" Mike forces his eyes open long enough to ask, wrapping his arms around Will like he's trying to

ensure he can't get away even if he wants to.

Will hums out softly, rubs his hand over Mike's back.

"Yeah, Mike. I'll be here."

Mike's asleep before he can hear his response, but it's okay. He already knew the answer before he'd ever asked the question. And it's okay, when he wakes up an hour later bleary eyed and pouty as Will insists he needs to get home before his mom begins to worry.

"Are you gonna let me kiss you goodbye, at least?"

He looks so pathetic, with his frowning lips and his stuffy nose and his hair standing up in every direction, and Will is tempted to say no because they have midterms coming up and he really can't afford to be sick.

But instead he just laughs and half-protests that *it's gross* as Mike presses a kiss to the corner of his mouth with warm, chapped lips. (It's not gross and he missed it and he loves it and he loves *Mike*, god he loves him.)

And even when Will is lying in bed the next week, coughing and sniffing and downing cold medicine every few hours as Mike spends his afternoons apologizing and bringing Will homemade soup from his mom in a bright red thermos - he still can't help but think that it was very much worth it.

**Author's Note:**

comments and kudos appreciated :')